

**Postcolonial missiology in the face of empire:  
in dialogue with Frantz Fanon and Steve Bantu Biko**

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*Abstract*

The challenges of neo-colonialism challenge academics and clergy alike to search for an alternative to what the Accra Confession declares as empire. For the Accra Confession, empire means the specific coming together of economic, cultural, political and military imperial power as a “system of dominance” to protect the interest of the powerful. The question is whether Missiology, given her colonial history and official collusion to imperialism, still has a role to play in the context of overcoming imperialism, today. I argue that the future of a post-colonial Missiology, in the face of empire, depends on a cross-cutting dialogue with interlocutors, who engage this legacy head on. Has the critique from African anti-colonial thinkers been engaged in the development of a postcolonial Missiology for our time? Here I highlight the challenge of two younger voices, namely Steve Bantu Biko and Frantz Fanon, in particular in the publications, *I write what I like* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, respectively, as they engage colonialism and imperialism, but more so, as they influenced South African Black Theology. This I argue is an overdue dialogue, in our ongoing quest for developing a truly postcolonial Missiology.

**Introduction: an ongoing struggle**

I am haunted by stories of young men, single mothers, breadwinners of families, who, like so many others, have lost their jobs. LenkaBula shares the testimony of “Rosemary, the tailor”:

My name is Rosemary van Dyk. I am a woman of mixed descent, known in South Africa as Cape Coloured. I worked in a clothing textile company for nine years, but the company was closed down because it could not compete with the interna-

tional textiles that are being imported into South Africa. The Cut and Trim Company in Khayelitsha sometimes call me when they have contracts from local clothing companies. In my previous job, I had a permanent position as a tailor. I had medical benefits, a pension fund and contributions to an unemployment insurance fund. Now, I am a casual labourer, I work for long hours and I am paid very little. I just wait to be called when there's work to be done. Work has ceased to be meaningful, and there are many people competing for few jobs (LenkaBula 2002:164)

Caught in the midst of what economists often call "jobless economic growth" are people like Rosemary, whom the Centre for Development and Enterprise refers to as "South Africa's door knockers" (2008:5). This report concludes,

Youth unemployment is very extensive, and dangerously entrenched. In fact, South Africa's level of youth unemployment is among the highest in the world. Only small numbers of young job-seekers are successful, and many do not seek jobs for long before becoming disillusioned.

Devout believers often come forward for prayers. They ask me, as a pastor, but more so, the church, to respond. Usually we convince ourselves that our prayers and "words of encouragement" are enough, and that these dear members of our flock have been, for the time being, well served. This peace of mind is important, as it allows us to continue and maintain our church business. However, deep down we know (and they know!) that there is something amiss. Despite our personal piety, our good intentions; despite our prayers, it seems as though we are rendered powerless by economic forces, or perhaps by some other system we are powerless against.

Whilst South Africa and many other countries in the South experienced transitions from classic colonialism (during which foreign colonial powers physically occupied these regions and stripped them of their resources) through settlements or administrative systems to independence or a post-colonial dispensation, their "liberation" has remained ambiguous and doubtful. I agree with Henriot (1998), who speaks of successive "waves" of slavery – colonialism, neocolonialism and neoliberal globalisation – which has created a post-colonial world wracked by vast economic inequalities between and within nations; a divided world where powerful elites remain the key players, the rule-makers and the referees. In this context, the new governments failed adequately to deal with this neocolonial system. It is this system that challenges us to ask the awkward questions about historically inherited (or perhaps imposed) theories of church and of her witness or

mission. My contribution here focuses on how we have dealt missiologically with these economic forces, and how we are to deal with them today, as they manifest themselves in the real-life struggles of our faith communities.

**An ecumenical process of studying, educating and confessing these economic realities**

Much has been said already.<sup>1</sup> These current economic processes, that have caused the aforementioned exclusion and social costs, have also been assessed from the perspective of the Reformed tradition through a process begun by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), that formally commenced in 1997. At a General Assembly of the WARC, held in Debrecen, Hungary, this representative Reformed community, in response to a challenge from the Southern African Reformed community in Kitwe, Zambia, called for a process of confession (*processus confessionis*), aiming at studying, recognising, educating, confessing and acting in the light of the economic and ecological implications of this global social force. A theological analysis was presented at the assembly as a basis for further reflection and practice. From a Trinitarian perspective it was argued that God is the Source and Sustainer of life in fullness, for all. There is a need for critical self-reflection whereby the idols of greed and power are unmasked. It was affirmed that the market is not divine, and that the church must engage in the economic policies of the day. The economy needs to be regulated and reformed by the quest to serve God's creation for the wellbeing of the entire world. This vocation is the essence of our mission in this particular time and space, and this life with all its riches is a gift from God. Choosing a holistic understanding of mission and spirituality implies making concrete historical choices in terms of the principles of the rule of Christ — also with regard to contemporary economic challenges. This means that everything that happens, needs to be analysed in terms of whether the reign of God and the rule of justice for the poor and oppressed are being served. The Assembly concluded that the current economic ideology and reality “endangers life” as God intended it to be. God’s vision for the world is prosperity, peace and justice – a world in which life is enjoyed and celebrated.

This process of study led to the next General Assembly in Accra, Ghana, in 2004, which took a strong position of “covenanting for justice” with regard to the economy and the earth, through what became known as the

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<sup>1</sup> The World Council of Churches released a document called, “Alternative Globalisation Addressing People and the Earth” AGAPE, in 2006, [<http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wccassembly/documents/english/pb-06-agape.pdf>].

“Accra Confession”<sup>2</sup>. In so doing, neoliberal economic globalisation was unmasked. I have been involved in at least two programmes, namely the Joint Action Team (JTA) and the CAP<sup>3</sup> youthexchange of the Missions Committee of WARC, which aims at implementing the Accra Confession. Following another project<sup>4</sup> on economic globalisation, a publication was accepted in 2010 by an assembly of the successor of WARC, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, namely, *“Dreaming of a different world: globalisation and justice for humanity and the earth, the challenge of the Accra Confession for Christians*. Authored jointly by the Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche, Germany and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, it declares liturgically,

... we observe in our world a coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power into a spirit of domination that seems to lord it over all and everything. We experience this presence in a pervasive spirit of destructive self-interest, even greed – the worship of money, goods and possessions; in a spirit that lacks compassionate justice and shows contemptuous disregard for the household of life and the gifts of creation (World Communion of Reformed Churches 2010:80).

### **Missiological engagement with this spirit of domination**

In his inaugural lecture and in line with the Accra Confession, Botha (2008:13-14) identifies this “spirit of domination” correctly as a spirit of empire, which manifests itself in the nation-state, society and academia. He points out that the future role of Christianity and mission (and then also missiology!) in addressing this critical challenge is, however, not obvious in the face of the historic and continuing collusion with imperialism<sup>5</sup> (Botha 2008:4-7).

<sup>2</sup> Some refer to the Accra *Confession*. For Smit this is however a misnomer, as the declaration is not a confession in the classical sense of the word, even though it includes a section in the form of confession. The Accra Confession however states, “We choose confession, not meaning a classical doctrinal confession, because the World Alliance of Reformed Churches cannot make such a confession, but to show the necessity and urgency of an active response to the challenges of our time and the call of Debrecen.”

<sup>3</sup> CAP is an acronym standing for Comrades, Artisans and Partners, which brings together youth leaders from Reformed churches in South Africa, Namibia, Belgium, Rwanda, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Congo (Brazzaville), amongst others, in an ecumenical encounter of biblical reflection, social action and a study of global social issues, whilst serving local communities.

<sup>4</sup> Cf Boesak, Weustmann, Amjad-Ali (2010, pp.7-16), for an overview of the project.

<sup>5</sup> Whilst there is a close relationship between “colonialism” and “imperialism”, one also needs to be clear about the differences. McEwan (2009:82) explains imperialism as a “system of domination over space”, whilst colonialism is the “tangible manifestation of imperial

In *Transforming mission*, Bosch (1991) presents, as usual, a well thought-out and clinical account of what Botha calls “the entanglement” between mission, imperialism and colonialism. As Bosch (1991:226-230; 302-313) deals with this entanglement, he argues that European colonisation did not happen by accident, and neither did the vices of the missionary imperialist expansion. He shows that colonisation was the direct consequence of the particular crusading *mentality* that persisted after the actual Crusades, but that it was also the consequence of the medieval theology of a just war (Bosch 1991:226). The violent imperialistic penetration of the so-called “new worlds”, in the expansion of commerce and the slave<sup>6</sup> trade, went hand in hand with what became known for the first time as “mission”, carried out by the agents of the ecclesial imperium, the “missionaries” (Bosch 1991:227-228). Bosch states: “The new word ‘mission’ is historically linked indissolubly with the colonial era and with the idea of a magisterial commissioning” (Bosch 1991:228). He states further (1991:302-303):

... the origin of the term “mission”, as we still tend to use it today, presupposes the ambience of the West’s colonisation of overseas territories and its subjugation of their inhabitants. Therefore, since the sixteenth century, if one said “mission”, one in a sense also said “colonialism” (Bosch 1991:302-303).

It is however of interest that Bosch doesn’t continue to unpack this “subjugation” by addressing it from the viewpoint of or together with the subjugated themselves. Even in his contribution to what he calls “a Missiology of Western culture” (1995) he doesn’t take these thoughts any further. This failure is perhaps related to his own continued embeddedness in what JJ Kritzinger calls “classic missiology”. One has to give Bosch credit, though, as he does refer to how, in the South African context, government officials, politicians and missionaries alike, continued to be allies in the propagation of the policy of separate development (Bosch 1991:304).

Nolan (1988:70-74), a key contributor to the Kairos Document, however calls this policy “internal colonialism”, in line with a long tradition of anti-imperialist thought.<sup>7</sup> Nolan and Adonis (1983) explain how in South African history, successive colonial administrations, which were extensions of the European empire, during the era of classic colonialism divided the country in colonies, republics and native settlements. Whilst in other parts of

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power...”, “almost always a consequence of imperialism”, and “the imposition of political control” through “settlements and political control”.

<sup>6</sup> The practice of slavery was of course not new, during this geographical expansion it could be distinguished from the slavery of Roman Imperialism in that now it only meant the enslavement black and brown peoples.

<sup>7</sup> This system is also sometimes called colonialism of a special type.

Africa there was political independence, movement towards the creation of post-colonial states or better yet, neocolonialism, in South Africa the imperial system morphed itself into a unique form. This was initiated, not in the first place through Afrikaner nationalism, but in the colonial contestation for the spoils under the British empire. Because of the discovery of gold, the development of internal colonialism followed a different path in South Africa from that in other settler colonies like the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The gold discovered in South Africa required deep-level mining and therefore vast amounts of cheap labour (Gilliomme 2004:232), and to deal with this need, a unique form was constructed. Nolan (1988:73-74) explains:

The only way to colonise the cheap labour within the same country was to devise a system of identity and separation. South Africa's "First World" had to be set apart from its "Third World" especially where political rights were concerned. There would have to be a way of creating separate identities for those who enjoyed the benefits of a colonising nation and those who were to remain colonised. It was not necessary to search for a criterion of identity, as racism was present already; it only needed to be systematised and controlled. Segregation and later Apartheid involved the artificial and systematic creation of a white national identity (and within that an Afrikaner "volks-identiteit") in order to reap the benefits of South Africa's wealth and to exclude the colonised workers of African, Indian and mixed descent ... Apartheid is a system of imposed separation and imposed identity.

In a twist of irony, this need of the empire perhaps prevented the launch of military campaigns aimed at the total decimation of the indigenous populations, as happened in the other examples.

Bosch clearly understood this colonial collusion, yet at least in *Transforming mission*, he never consciously engages those anticolonial thinkers who confronted this oppressive system. It seems as though his insights into the European and colonial collusion didn't feature in his agenda for transforming mission. Another possible reason for the omission might be that he left it to his students to take this study further, and to develop a conscious postcolonial missiology to confront empire.

### **Towards the postcolonial**

Amongst South African theologians, it was perhaps Maluleke (2007:503-527) who first spoke explicitly of postcolonial mission. In referring here to

“postcolonial”, I draw on the distinction Kim<sup>8</sup> makes (Maluleke 2007:162) between “post-colonial”, describing it as “a chronological moment when many of the West’s formerly colonised 'nations' became politically independent”, and on the other hand, “postcolonial”, which he describes as “continuity with the anticolonial movement ... a critical stance against colonialism in the past and its ideological rhetoric that is still operative in the present” (Maluleke 2007:163).

In the South African context, one needs to record the earlier work by Adonis “*Die afgebreekte skeidsmuur weer opgebou*”,<sup>9</sup> published in 1982, which begins with an analysis of Dutch and British colonisation and its impact on the missions policy of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. This work is a critical precursor to a quest for a postcolonial missiology and stands in the tradition of the South African black liberation theology, which not only made the connection between colonialism and missionary Christianity, but also moved towards breaking the connection on an epistemological level. It therefore also stands in the tradition of anti-colonial scholarship.

The discourse on the interplay between colonialism, postcolonial theory and Southern African theology is therefore not new, irrespective of the fact that England (2004:88-99), in his mapping of the interface between postcolonial theory and theology in South Africa, begins with West’s reference in 1997 to “an important task awaiting African biblical studies”. In his dialogue with Punt and with reference to Draper’s work amongst Zulu interpreters of the Bible, England suggests that Foucault’s analysis of discourse, the materiality of language, and power in *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972) is definitely a must-read for all postcolonial theorists to qualify for the guild. He then criticises the classic postcolonial text by Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1979), as missing Foucault’s key insights. I would however contend that possibly, at least in Africa (and perhaps this is Said’s point!), one needs to “venerate” different intellectual ancestors. If post-colonial studies and therefore any postcolonial theology is to entail the retrieval or liberation of the silenced discourses or an act of resistance in the face of imperial onslaught, then the gap in a conscious dialogue *with* and not simply and safely *about* anticolonial *African* thinkers, also in Bosch’s treatment of the subject, is glaring, if not an indictment. What is needed is a deeper engagement with this “spirit of empire”, through the experiences and reflections of those who were on the front lines of the anticolonial struggles. So, in the next section, I refer to the insights of two relatively young African thinkers, namely Frantz Fanon and Steve Bantu Biko, who, in the historical

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also Sugirtharajah 2003, p.15-16; Punt 2003, p.61-62; McEwan 2009, p.17-26.

<sup>9</sup> The translation of this title means literally, “The broken down wall, built up again”, referring to the metaphor of the “dividing wall of hostility”, being brought down by Jesus Christ, in Eph 2:14.

development of South African black theology, challenged the epistemology of colonial science by offering us this deeper engagement, that is the possibility of a different postcolonial epistemology.

### **In dialogue with anticolonial voices**

#### *Frantz Fanon: an anticolonial epistemology*

Fanon is considered one of the key anticolonial writers (besides Aime Cesaire, Amilcar Cabral, etc<sup>10</sup>) to set the stage for postcolonial theory. He was a native from Martinique, a former French colony in the Caribbean, who died at the young age of 36, in 1961. His father was a descendant of African slaves, whilst his mother was of mixed African, Indian and European descent.<sup>11</sup> Whilst all the works of Fanon remain critical in developing a postcolonial missiology, in this contribution I focus on *The wretched of the earth*, as it concentrates, one could argue, the maturity of Fanon's thought. More importantly, whilst his earlier well-known work *Black skin, white masks* has deeply influenced black consciousness movements in the USA and South Africa, in *The wretched of the earth* he sets out to engage essentialist binary notions of "black" and "white", or "native" and "settler", within the framework of a peasant revolution in the context of neocolonialism (McEwan 2009:49). Fanon is not romantic or naïve about the native any longer, and Masilela (1985) shows the development from the thinking of the younger Fanon, influenced by existentialism and negritude, through his participation in the post-colonial Algerian struggle for liberation against the national elite, to "third worldism", that is a greater consciousness of the salience of the economic class.

In this second phase of his thinking, Fanon becomes more and more involved in the struggles in Tunisia, North Africa against French colonialism, yet identifying himself more and more with Algeria. His involvement in the Algerian struggle for liberation marked him as a militant, but more importantly, for our purposes, as an intellectual engaged in the quest to overcome European imperialism in general and French imperialism in particular. For him it's an intellectual journey from trying to cross the borders to get into the fortress, then critically engaging with the gatekeepers, and lastly, in *The wretched of the earth*, entering into dialogue with the vanquished, as an engaged intellectual struggling against the strategies of neo-colonialism. For him the struggle now aims at the liberation of the colonised as well as the coloniser. He states, "For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, we must

<sup>10</sup> Sugirtharajah 2003, p.14; Maluleke 2008, p.116; McEwan 2009, 45-50.

<sup>11</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frantz\\_Fanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frantz_Fanon) [Accessed: 22 March 2011]

turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man” (Fanon 2001[1961]:255).

As Sartre indicates in the preface, Fanon is speaking here to the native, the combatant struggling for this liberation (Fanon 2001[1961]:9). Fanon gives a succinct exposition of his anticolonial epistemology. For him, colonialism is not simply about keeping the borders, but rather about negating, dehumanising<sup>12</sup> the natives and their thought processes. It is about fabricating and entrenching the myth that the mental apparatus of the colonised, “their traditions and myths are the very sign of their poverty of spirit and of their constitutional depravity” (Fanon 2001[1961]:32). During the struggle to overcome this during, in Fanon’s words, the “decolonisation” period, the colonialist elite would, after independence, seek out from amongst the masses of the colonised intellectuals to speak on behalf of the bourgeoisie of the colonialist country. These intellectuals would seek peace — a situation in which settler and native could live side by side. For Fanon, however, this cannot happen, because of the material inequalities and the unequal power relations, which necessitate a struggle for decolonisation.

Indeed, the source for understanding is in the concrete struggle for the material and symbolic means towards dignity, and because colonialism is violent by its very nature, it is only in this violent struggle, that it becomes possible to understand. Fanon (2001[1961]:115-118) makes it clear that, in this struggle to the death, essentialist binaries are contested, as it emerges that not all settlers are evil, in the same way that not all natives are committed to the quest for justice. There is indeed a need to take cognisance of the material conditions experienced during the post-independence phases, as well as the challenges posed by both historic and new developments. In this context, the ongoing struggle for liberation functioned as a fundamental key to understanding truth and rationality and, at a different level, the issues of methodology and scientific enquiry. I now turn to the way in which these insights have been understood in South African black consciousness, and the critical link it formed to what later became known as South African black liberation theology.

#### *Steve Bantu Biko, an epistemology of black praxis*

It has been said that Fanon influenced black consciousness thinkers like Biko and Malcolm X, especially by means of his work *Black skin, white masks*. Yet, Biko (2006[1978]:31;105; Khoapa 2008:73) also shows clear knowledge of *The wretched of the earth*, as it is expressed in some of his writings.

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<sup>12</sup> Fanon shows that the language the settler uses for the native are zoological terms, i.e. the breeding swarms, the stink, etc. 2008, 32

Biko was actively involved in the black consciousness movement, although he was banned from writing and travelling from 1973. His collection of writings is best captured in the work *I write what I like*, which was the title of his column in the SASO newsletter. In this work, his inclination towards an epistemology in praxis already becomes apparent. Biko does not struggle with colonialist theories for an academic audience and purpose. He reflects and writes about praxis, for activists, students and in particular and unashamedly for the black community. His theoretical work is his praxis against colonialism in society, but also against the faith of the colonial world. In dealing with the impact of Christian missiology, Biko, a member of the Anglican Church, shows appreciation for the role of missionaries, who were “the first people to come and relate to blacks in a human way in South Africa”, yet he is scathing in his analysis of them as the “vanguard of the colonisation movement to ‘civilize and educate’ the savages” (Biko (2006[1978]:102), and he consequently proposed a stronger role for black theology (Biko (2006[1978]:34-35; 64, 104). For him, this means developing new conceptual tools and a new reading of the Bible. He states:

It has always been the pattern throughout history that whoever brings new order knows it best and therefore is the perpetual teacher of those to whom the new order is being brought. If the white missionaries were "right" about their God in the eyes of the people, then the African people could only accept whatever these new know-all tutors had to say about life. The acceptance of the colonial-tainted version of Christianity marked the turning point in the resistance of African people (Biko 2006[1978]:60).

For Biko, it was critical to see the struggle against racism and colonialism as a struggle against a coherent colonial system, not primarily against individual prejudices. In this regard, he argues for an understanding of South Africa as seen through the lens of colonialism, as discussed earlier. The key challenge then for intellectuals is unearthing the history of the people as a cultural and psychological liberation, but also developing a new culture, not simply based on a fixated, precolonial past, or on colonialist constructions, but struggling against neocolonialism in the present reality. For Biko then this struggle is one for mental emancipation, for a new mentality, for a new humanity (Biko (2006[1978]:96-108). What Biko sees as understanding, is again, in line with Fanon, forged in struggle, but more so, he argues for rereading and recovering history (Biko (2006[1978]:105-106) from this perspective, as well as for a rereading of the Biblical texts (Biko (2006[1978]:34, 64-65) in the light of this struggle. Blackness for Biko means more than a darker pigmentation. In the praxis of struggle towards a new humanity, it is a

“reflection of a mental attitude” and the commitment to “fight” (Biko (2006[1978]:52), an “emancipatory weapon” (Mbembe 2007:140-141). The question is: What are the implications of these realities for the way in which we transform and do postcolonial missiology?

### **Towards a postcolonial missiology**

While Pityana (1995) confirms that this relatively new and different emphasis in theology has been influenced by Western social and scientific developments, he argues that the primacy of the enculturation and liberation discourse of the oppressed and marginalised has indeed superseded the Western preoccupation with mere rational explanations in dialogue with the educated non-Christian. It is perhaps Bosch’s student and successor, JNJ (Klippiess) Kritzinger, who shows that it was the proponents of South African black theology in particular who made the connection between the racism institutionalised in the Apartheid system after 1948 and the colonial conquest. As Adonis, Mofokeng, Maluleke and Botha, amongst others, carved out the implications of this epistemological break with colonial epistemology and mission theology, they opened people’s eyes to this inherent colonial nature of racism. In taking this challenge of South African black theology to mission and missiology seriously, Kritzinger (1988:114) states, “Black Theology does not see racism in isolation from the other dimensions of oppression”. He shows how black theologians trace the origin of racism to the economic greed of Western colonists (Kritzinger 1988:121-122). These reflections clearly stand in the anticolonial tradition, as traced briefly in the previous section, and what is needed is the shift towards the postcolonial.

Sugirtharajah (2003:15) shows that postcolonialism seeks to go beyond essentialist and contrastive ways of thinking that remain prevalent in the anticolonialist tradition, and seeks a “radical syncretising of each oppositions”. We recognise this development already in the thinking of the older Fanon and Biko, as they attempt to forge a critical and profitable syncretisation (Sugirtharajah 2003:16; Mangcu 2008:2-3), according to which both the colonised and coloniser are in need of liberation — the colonised from dependency, and the coloniser from imperialist, racist perceptions, representations and institutions (:ibid.). Punt warns that this does not mean a new hegemonic paradigm or label taking over. He explains (2003:62):

The use of postcolonial as a catch-all can make it impervious to addressing the specifics of the past as the present, and so become an imperialist metanarrative itself ... it is given with the dialectic of colonial and imperial experience that projects of resistance and emancipation are disparate rather than harmonious, diverse rather than uniform, postcolonial.

In postcolonial missiologies, therefore, new questions are being asked, relating to the finer nuances of the contestations between the colonised and the colonisers, as indicated in the term “postcolony” (Mbembe 2001). The one cannot be understood without the other, and our readings of texts, but also of context, happen simultaneously, but remain aware of the gaps, collusions and contestations (Sugurtharajah 2003:16).

This process therefore takes the form of antiracist and anti-imperialist protests and struggles by newer churches in the postcolony, but also by marginalised sections within the churches and communities of the North Atlantic shores. In these small, diverse and struggling communities and cultures that emphasise communal and democratic modes of decision-making and reflection, “doing” theology becomes a communal exercise. But most importantly, this happens at the juncture of the contestations and conflicts, as we might find that new faces and expressions of empire come to the fore.

The third aspect of postcolonial missiology is the role of and the emphasis on history and the rereading of tradition. The distortions of history, based on power configurations, are addressed through the retelling of the histories and tradition by those who were silenced. The invocation of these histories, in the face of empire, presents moments of grace and disgrace; a new awareness of our sinfulness, but also of the church’s moments of prophetic witness, as well as shameful betrayal (Schreiter 1996:5).

### **The struggles continue**

Recent transitions towards the creation of post-colonial states have not dealt with the root cause of the injustice, namely an imperial system that continues to reproduce inequalities, and the social exclusion of people like Rosemary, the tailor. The current expressions of empire show that the core structures of oppression have been left intact, only to be translated in the context of a new set of historical factors. In this context, the challenge and struggle for post-colonial missiology clearly seems to be asking the new questions about the postcolony, positioning the procedures in the current antiracist and imperialist struggles, and invoking all our histories, our moments of grace but also of disgrace. This might be the only way in which to exorcise those spirits that might otherwise keep haunting us all.

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